

**CITY OF LONG BEACH
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES
February 16, 2006**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Harry Saltzgaver, Vice President, at 9:02 a.m., at the El Dorado Park West Senior Center Bridge Room. Phil Hester, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine, took roll call and confirmed a quorum.

Present: Harry Saltzgaver, Vice President
Bea Antenore
Simon George
Drew Satariano

Absent: Chris Kozaites, President (excused)
Brett Waterfield (late)

Staff: Phil Hester, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine
Thomas Shippey, Manager, Maintenance Operations Bureau
Dennis Eschen, Manager, Planning and Development Bureau
Chrissy Marshall, Manager, Community Recreation Programs
Janet Day-Anselmo, Manager, Business Operations Bureau
William Greco, Acting Chief Ranger
Alvin Bernstein, Superintendent, Community Enrichment Programs Bureau
Robin Black, Executive Assistant to the Director

Guests: Mike Donelon
Bob McKittrick, Little League Baseball
Lisa Duarte, Los Altos Bobby Sox
Yvette Ramos, Los Altos Bobby Sox
Kym Rohlf, Bobby Sox National Headquarters
Jim Mercurio, Long Beach Girls Fastpitch
Patrick McKean, Lakewood Village Little League
Trey Scharlin, Long Beach Soccer Club
Fernando Gonzalez, Cesar Chavez Youth Soccer
Steve Hoy, Los Altos Youth Baseball and Softball
Kristen Autry, Save LBC Skyline
David Sundstrom
Johnny Stenson
Michael Gatz

It was moved by Commissioner Antenore and seconded by Commissioner Satariano to excuse the absence of President Kozaites. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Saltzgaver welcomed Albert Guerra, as a new Parks and Recreation Commissioner.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 19, 2006

It was moved by Commissioner Antenore and seconded by Commissioner Satariano to approve the January 19, 2006 Parks and Recreation Commission minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

III. SAMMY AWARD PRESENTATION – DAVID ASHMAN

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that the Sammy Award has been deferred to the March 16, 2006 Commission meeting.

IV. EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH PRESENTATION FOR FEBRUARY

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that Commissioner Satariano would announce the Employee of the Month for February.

Commissioner Satariano announced Andrea Lain as Field Operations Employee of the Month for February.

Ms. Terri Eggers, as her supervisor, spoke about Ms. Lain.

V. COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS

#06-0201

PERSONAL SERVICES/INSTRUCTION AGREEMENTS-MONTHLY APPROVAL

It was moved by Commissioner Antenore and seconded by Commissioner Satariano to authorize the Community Recreation Services Bureau Manager or his or her management designee to execute the Personal Services and Instruction Agreements and amend Attachment “A” of the agreements as needed. The motion carried unanimously.

#06-0202

RECOMMENDATION TO NAME THE SOUTH BASEBALL FIELD AT STEARNS CHAMPIONS PARK AS “TOM BUCKLE FIELD”

Mr. Hester stated that this item was referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission by the City Council. Mr. Buckle was a 30-year volunteer with the little league organization and he passed away last year. This request was forwarded by the 4th District Council office. Mr. Hester stated that this item was

heard by the City Council's Housing and Neighborhoods Committee on February 14, 2006, and would go back to the City Council on February 21, 2006. If the Parks and Recreation Commission approve this request, the little league would dedicate the field at their opening on March 4, 2006.

It was moved by Commissioner Satariano and seconded by Commissioner George to recommend to the Housing and Neighborhoods Committee and the full City Council that the south baseball field at Stearns Champions Park be named "Tom Buckle Field." The motion carried unanimously.

#06-0203

MEMORIAL BENCH FOR KENNETH A. AYSTER

Mr. Hester stated that this is a request similar to other requests for memorial benches, and this is to request a bench at El Dorado Regional Park with a plaque.

It was moved by Commissioner Antenore and seconded by Commissioner Guerra to approve the placement and installation of the memorial bench for Mr. Kenneth A. Ayster. The motion carried unanimously.

#06-0204

EXECUTION OF A FIRST AMENDMENT TO CONTRACT TENNIS CLASSES PERMIT NO. 28246

Mr. Hester stated that the City has an agreement for the operation of the tennis centers at Billie Jean King and El Dorado with Cathy Jacobson Guzy. When the City last reviewed the agreement, they asked that Ms. Jacobson Guzy take on the operation of all tennis programs throughout the city, which she agreed to. It appears that the calculations that were done to establish that base rate were incorrect, in the City's favor. Therefore, Ms. Jacobson Guzy has asked for some consideration as a result of the error. The Department feels comfortable with this request. Staff has not had sufficient time to research and verify all the numbers, so staff is requesting that Ms. Jacobson Guzy's March payment be deferred until staff can come back, hopefully at the March meeting, with a recommendation.

It was moved by Commissioner George and seconded by Commissioner Satariano to authorize the execution of a First Amendment to Contract Tennis Classes Permit No. 28246 between the City of Long Beach and Cathy Jacobson Guzy, an individual doing business as First Serve, suspending the payment of the March 2006 permit fee. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that the Sports Park item would be taken next.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. LONG BEACH SPORTS PARK AND YOUTH GOLF LEARNING CENTER – SITE PLAN 3A AND 3B

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that staff received a message last night from Mr. Sundstrom, who is here today, requesting that the item be pulled from the agenda. He said that the request is in light of a community meeting, which has been scheduled for February 25, 2006. Because they received this request last night and because that public meeting is an informational meeting only, it is his feeling that they need to go ahead with the agenda item today simply because they have several people who are here to hear the presentation. The other mitigating factor is that they have the staff here ready to make that presentation. If it is acceptable to the other Commissioners, they will go forward with this presentation. The Commissioners agreed to go forward with the item.

Vice President Saltzgaver told Mr. Sundstrom that he felt compelled to allow him to address the Commission before they start the presentation, with the understanding that they are moving forth. There will be public comment after the presentation, because it is an agenda item, and Mr. Sundstrom will have a chance to speak again at that time.

Mr. David Sundstrom said, "I didn't plan to speak today but I can share some of my concerns about today's procedure. First of all, I understand that the action we are taking today in this room is really advisory. I just wanted to go on record regarding the process; I think it has been flawed and there are some misrepresentations on the record regarding the conditional approval by the Planning Commission for the Sports Park design. Back on October 20, I did address the Planning Commission, and as a result of that discussion, they requested staff to work with the community to try and come up with a modified design of the project. The only opportunity we have had to formally discuss it with City staff was at a meeting on December 14, at Veterans Park. That meeting was scheduled for 90 minutes and the City's presentation took all but the last 10 minutes of the scheduled 90 minutes. There was no record recorded of that meeting, no stenographer, there was no audio-visual team from the City, and I don't think that the anecdotal advice that was given after the meeting was a proper exchange between the City and the community. As a partial make-up call, there is a much longer meeting that Mr. Saltzgaver already pointed out, scheduled for February 25, 2006. It was my hope that during that meeting there would be more of a give and take between City representatives Amy Bodek from Planning (sic), Dennis Eschen, and Larry Ryan from the architectural firm. If we were to simply carry over any kind of approval by this body until your next regularly scheduled meeting, which would be in the middle of March, it would still give staff two to three weeks to prepare for their ultimate presentation to City Council, which I understand is April 4, 2006."

Vice President Saltzgaver thanked Mr. Sundstrom for his comment. He requested the staff presentation.

Mr. Hester said that he would ask Dennis Eschen to make the presentation on behalf of staff and also to explain to the Commission what staff has been doing since the last time the Commission has heard this. He reminded the Commission that they already approved the project and the location previously. The only reason they are coming back to the Commission is the result of a request from the Planning Commission to look at alternatives. "Staff has held meetings and there was a community meeting and individual meetings held with representatives from the environmental community. There are some options that will be shared by Mr. Eschen today that represent the best efforts so far to address some of the environmental concerns. I think it needs to be made clear that the item before the Commission today is not to begin discussion on whether this is a project or not, it is looking at what has been done in the interim to try to address some of these environmental issues that have been brought forth. That needs to be clear from your standpoint. You are not being asked to re-approve the project itself, you are looking at some of the alternatives. The recommendations from staff to the Commission today were to send forth the various options to the City Council for their consideration on April 4, 2006."

Mr. Hester said that staff feels that they have worked in good faith with the environmental community on some of these options. "I can tell you that these changes are fairly significant from the standpoint of the overall site plan and with the challenges of the site plan, and I think the architect will talk a little bit about some of those. Some of those are still being refined. The construction grading and those types of things, which are issues, still protect the integrity of what the project was all about. It is still working itself through. Conceptually, the Commission still has the opportunity to address those options, one of which is the original plan. There are a couple of options available. The meeting on February 25, 2006, is also an information meeting to share with the community the various options and not to redesign. There was a misunderstanding that came from the Planning Commission's direction that we would look to redesign. That is not the purpose of that meeting. The meeting on February 25, 2006, does allow for the potential refining of some of the options that you will be looking at today, before it goes to City Council. Staff's feeling right now is that we will probably take the original plan along with a couple of the options to the City Council on April 4, 2006. We can come back if you would like, at the March Commission meeting, to further provide you with information on any changes or corrections that result from the community meeting for the design of the facility, especially as it relates to the some of the grading. Quick calculations on some of the grading as a result of making some of these changes are fairly significant, so it will be important that we make this work."

Mr. Hester said, "If you are comfortable with that, I will ask Mr. Eschen to take the lead and the architect is also here to answer questions that may come up,

and I know that there are some members of the public here who would like to comment.”

Vice President Saltzgaver said that he had one clarification he would need to make regarding the Planning Commission’s actual legal action, which was certification of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). So the EIR has been certified by the Planning Commission. Vice President Saltzgaver inquired about the direction the Commission should take to cover the environmental component.

Mr. Mike Mais, from the City Attorney’s office, said that Vice President Saltzgaver was correct, that at the Planning Commission meeting back in October they did certify the EIR as being fully adequate. There were a number of members of the community that attended the meeting that voiced some concerns as to certain design elements of the project and actually some of them objected to the project itself. So the condition of project approval was that the Planning Commission directed staff to try and work with members of the community to see if they could meet some of their concerns. It wasn’t really to add an environmental component, which was already there. It was just to try and meet with the community and see what they could work out, a compromise basically.

Mr. Dennis Eschen stated that the project has enough history that you could fill a book with, but he won’t take you all the way back through the last 20 years. Last February, the Commission reviewed the EIR and in July, the Commission took action to approve the site plan, which is on a perspective drawing behind you. This includes six softball/baseball fields, four soccer/football fields, two indoor soccer/multipurpose arena areas, a parking lot, and approximately 10 acres for a golf learning center. That was the plan that went to the Planning Commission and they certified the EIR in October. The Planning Commission action also included a recommendation on changing the zoning and changing the general plan to approve the land use of the site, which was formerly institutional and industrial, to approve it as a park use. The Planning Commission asked staff to see if there were ways that we could compromise with the concerns raised by the community.

Mr. Eschen said, “Staff did work with the consultants to come up with a number of alternatives and agreed to take those to the community in December. We had one alternative at that time, which we are now listing as option 3A. After the feedback from the meeting, we came up with another alternative, which we are going to call 3B. Basically, there was a long list of concerns and the main concerns and objections were a loss of an opportunity for restorable wetlands, wetlands having a value environmentally and being very critically endangered because there is a significant reduction of wetlands in the region. Second, was an opportunity to provide and restore native habitat. Particularly in the west side of the city, there is very little contact with nature, and a native habitat was something that was desperately needed by the community. Third, the west side

of the city lacks adequate park space and accessible park space and this, being a special use and active recreational project, didn't meet a lot of community needs for a free, passive open space. Finally, the existing land flow of the site creates the high place of Long Beach, not officially named but for purposes of communication called Exxon Hill, that provides a panoramic overlook of the downtown and shoreline, and that was the value that needs to be preserved. Staff has taken those four items of the community's input from the Planning Commission meeting and tried to create alternatives. Both options that we are presenting today have substantial concessions. First of all, we have eliminated the golf learning center. We feel there are possibly other locations in town and the programming and overall design concept for the golf learning center was much less evolved than the rest of the sports park concept, and funding was also less evolved and problematic. It was also a much smaller facility, the space that was being allocated to it was not essential and it could probably be relocated to another portion of the city. Whereas the combination of fields and sports park needs a great deal of room, and staff feels that there is no other location in the city where that could be accommodated. Both of the options provide wetland areas, native habitat areas, passive recreational space, all in a total of about 12 acres with a panoramic overview. I'll now show you what the alternatives are."

Mr. Eschen presented the original plan and said, "This is basically looking from the southwest corner looking northeast. This is the Sunnyside Cemetery, if you would be hovering over it in a helicopter and looking northward. The soccer fields are in the lower elevation area next to California Avenue. This is California Avenue, Spring Street, and then Orange Avenue. The golf learning center was in the high location, as you can see on the topography. Actually, I have a version here without the trees on it so you can see the topography a lot better. This is the golf learning center, which included a community building, as well as a driving range and putting areas. These two cone things are the arena areas or the speed soccer areas; this is a batting cage area. There is a skate park located behind the batting cages and six softball fields. So that is the already approved plan."

Mr. Eschen said that at the December meeting, we took to the community this plan, Option 3A, which we evolved out of the eight other site plans. Basically, the parking lot and everything north of the parking lot does not change in this plan. The golf learning center area is basically replaced by the soccer fields. Where the soccer fields were in the original plan is replaced by the wetlands. Outside of the soccer fields, next to Orange Avenue, is a passive park area that will be landscaped with native habitat, accessible from the parking lot. It is all free access.

Mr. Eschen said, "Option 3B basically keeps the site plan more as it was in the original plan. The golf learning center is removed with passive park and native habitat area. The Exxon Hill overlook area is basically retained very close to its existing location, although there has to be some grading to get downhill to the

wetland area. The ridge would actually move somewhat to the east area. The soccer fields are back to the original location along California Avenue, but they are raised to California Avenue elevation instead of being down in the flood plain. The loss of one soccer field, we feel, would be made up for in total playing days by the fact that these would have an artificial surface and they won't be flooded, so there won't be as many down days for maintenance as you would have in a natural turf field. We feel that the three fields essentially would function very close to the same level of total playing days as the four fields that you would have before."

Mr. Eschen turned it over to Mr. Larry Ryan for any questions.

Vice President Saltzgaver asked for Mr. Ryan to explain just a little bit about the wetland area and the requirements that it needed to meet in terms of flood retention.

Mr. Ryan responded, "I will attempt to do that. One of the challenges we have on the site is that there is a large storm drain infrastructure from Los Angeles County that actually outlets into our basin. It is in approximately this area. During the normal course of time it likely doesn't see water. Let me back up. This area that we are showing in blue is representative of where the water would be during storm events. This isn't to imply that this is a standing body of water or that this is a wetlands and an appreciable water body year-round. It is subject to when there are periods of storm activity. We will be getting nuisance water and we want to handle that in a real proactive way so it doesn't become a main problem on the site. We also have the opportunity to cleanse that water as it comes out of this outlet through a riparian corridor wetland environment. I don't want to be misrepresenting this so that if someone saw this exhibit with a big blue area and in years to come, should this be built, would they say, 'Where is my lake?' It is not envisioned as that type of activity. Now, when that outlet is serving its function and handling the storms in the northwest part of the region here, we have an approximate 96-inch pipe. There are several outlets that come together, that are dumping water out, and we need to retain 36 feet of water within our area here on either configuration. In doing that, there is a visible challenge from a design standpoint because that is very important, and so we need to evaluate the options. How do we design with that potential inevitable event and yet not have this look like an Army Corps of Engineers project the other nine out of ten years? What we have done is we have used that outlet structure in both alternatives and combined that with an on-site site drainage system that will cause a bio-swale that feeds into that. What that allows us to do is to pick up all the nuisance drainage water from the ball field area, actually from the parking lot as well, and run it into the same riparian corridor serving to cleanse the water, take out the contaminants and doing it in a very naturalized manner. All of that integrates down into this area and would then connect to the outlet structure and into the adjacent river. That is kind of a general overview."

Vice President Saltzgaver thanked Mr. Ryan. He then asked if the Commission had any questions before turning to the public for comments.

Mr. Hester thanked Mr. Ryan. "This was a lot of hard work trying to come up with the two plans that you have here. Also, the City has taken a step forward by giving up a facility, the golf learning center, of which there are golf courses on the east side. The whole philosophy of this was to try and locate a teaching center for kids and youth in the central part of our city or the west side, to be able to serve that particular purpose. We are giving that up and we are going to try to find another location. The other thing was that we wanted to be true to the overall concept of the facility when it was decided to move this facility from El Dorado, and we are giving up one of our soccer fields. You have some soccer people here who will tell you that there is a need for many more soccer fields than less soccer fields. The positive is that the original plan did put the fields originally in a flood basin area, so they were subject to flooding during high storm times, which would take them out of play. Plus, they were regular turf, which would also take them out of play and would affect the amount of usage. We hope with the new artificial turf and the new things they are doing with that, the fact is that we have this facility that will be wet and artificial turf will actually allow us to maximize the use. But still I think they are large enough that they can be subdivided into smaller fields, so there is a lot of flexibility. The parking, which is kind of simple, in one of the plans works better by having the soccer field a little closer. But again, we are giving that up also. The plan will probably be a better plan. We did still protect the integrity of the softball and baseball area, which was critical. It allows us to have arena soccer or roller hockey, basketball, and some of those type of events in that particular complex also. The other thing I think would be important that needs to be gotten out there, even though this is being geared toward adults, this facility is open to the public during the day up until 4:30 or 5:00 p.m. Some people have said that this is a fenced off facility, that no one can use it; it is not public, etc. During the day this facility is open to the public; the sports part of it and of course the natural area, which would be handled separately. So it is going to be used. Also, it allows for a lot of our youth leagues to be able to play some of their big tournaments and events in a facility that we think is first class. There are some other facilities like this in Southern California that a lot of our groups travel a long distance to be able to play on. We want them to be able to stay here and we want them to bring their tournaments to Long Beach. That is part of the design from the athletic side. On the passive side, the plan addresses and is true to the concept of what this whole project was supposed to be 20 years ago. There are people in this room that were involved on that task force that made this decision. I think it is trying to be true to that and at the same time taking a look at the passive piece of this. I consider this, there are a lot of details definitely to be worked out, and as Larry will tell you, it is evolving all the time. We talk about grading plans, etc. To be true to the original concept, addressing this part of the city and our environmental and passive areas, I think one of these options will make a much better project. You may want to drive by the site and see what it is now and if the City is able to make this happen, it will

certainly be a showcase for the City on how to take a really challenged area and make it into an area that is positive.”

Vice President Saltzgaver asked if anyone had questions.

Commissioner Guerra stated that he wanted to clarify the public use that the general public could walk in during the day. But he heard that there is one central gate to get into the facility.

Mr. Hester responded that there is one gate into the active area.

Commissioner Guerra asked that if he wanted to ride with his boys on his bicycle to go see the wetland area, he could just do that and walk right in.

Mr. Hester responded, “Yes. The main athletic fields would be fenced for security and control of access, but the passive area and the parking lot and all those areas would be open. We would have to look at the safety issues, as it relates to those areas also. But during the day, the gates would be open for people to come in and just walk around.”

Commissioner Guerra stated that it was his understanding that there are active oil wells on the property. He asked about the non-active ones. Could those be turned into active ones after the park opens? He noted that on the site plan there are a couple of oil wells in the middle of a soccer field.

Mr. Eschen responded that there are 46 wells on the site, 17 are active. The City has part of the royalty interest in the oil below the site, but there are also other partners and there is an oil well operator. The operator has basically surface access throughout the site. They can go drill a well wherever they want to. As a part of our deal with them, we are making some land transactions. We will have a contract that will restrict them from doing that once we have a developed plan, they won't be able to go back and drill in the middle of one of our fields. We are negotiating to take that right away from them. They have that now, but we are going to take that out of the project in exchange for cash and a land swap.

Mr. Hester said that on the plans there are some active wells and some of the fields are where they are because of those.

Mr. Eschen said, “There are 17 active wells and we are completely in control of where the softball field locations are. Larry has spent hundreds of hours moving fields around to fit them in between the oil wells. That is why in the options we didn't make any changes in the baseball part of the park, because we just couldn't move them anywhere and avoid the oil wells.”

Mr. Hester stated that they are going to be abandoning some of the oil wells and some of them are being brought in.

Mr. Eschen indicated that due to the grading, some of them would have to be re-elevated.

Mr. Hester said that it is an easy challenge.

Vice President Saltzgaver addressed the public. "I would ask you to make your comments directly to what we are addressing today, and that is the potential for these options. The sports park itself has been approved and we are not talking about operation of the sports park today. That is way down the road. I would ask finally that you limit your comments to three minutes. With that, the floor is open. Please give your name and address for the record."

"My name is Steve Hoy. I live at 6324 E. Colorado St., Long Beach, 90803. I am a current president of the youth baseball and softball in El Dorado Park. We currently serve over 550 boys and girls. We operate on four fields currently; two of them are baseball fields that are dedicated just to the boys that aren't used by the girls. They are permitted by the City for other uses, but they are not used by adult softball. Two are adult softball fields, and we over the years have lost time on those fields. This year the Department has backed up the adult softball times to 6:00 p.m. It used to be 6:30 p.m. So our ability to operate games on those two fields has been heavily restricted. It is hard to get people to come and play because we have to start at 4:30 p.m. in order to get a game in by 6:00 p.m., to be off the field. The restriction now is going from 6:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. has put a real crimp in our ability to service the kids. And, obviously we are in total support of what the City is doing here to not only increase our ability to service the kids but also to continue to service the adults as well. So, we are in support and obviously in vast need of, we need those fields until 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m., and we can use them and not having them is a real detriment for us. We are in support."

"My name is Johnny Stenson. I am a 40 year resident of Long Beach and I serve as the President of the West Side Long Beach Youth Foundation. I represent over 5,000 kids that are involved in all the various sports over on the west side. We have been a supporter of this project for some time. We have participated in the various meetings that have been conducted, where we got an opportunity to provide input. We all know the local parks are overcrowded. The kids aren't having the opportunity to be able to play sports in their local community because of the adults that are paying to play and take up the time and space on these fields. A project like this is something that we really need because it is going to give parks back to the children that are in the communities. We have seen compromises. While we are not happy that the soccer fields have been reduced from four to three and that the golf learning center has been taken out of the project. In order to reach a compromise, we are accepting the hard work and effort that has been done by the Planning Commissioners and by the architect and everyone involved. We know it has been a difficult process for them. We also understand those in the community that are concerned about wetlands and natural habitat. We put our faith and

our confidence in those that have put forth the plan here. And we can live with the plan the way it is, to compromise, either one, three soccer fields, either one of the options here, we can live with it as long as we move forth with this project and give the local parks back to the kids and the communities.”

“Chairman and Commissioners, my name is Mike Donelon. I live in California Heights. I am going to hand you an article that was published in the Press Telegram that I wrote. And, it pretty much speaks for itself. To save time, I am going to read it quickly and make some brief comments. During the El Dorado Park debacle, most of you remember that when the sports park was originally planned when I sat on the City Council. I represented the area where the sports park has now been moved. I must take issue with this lack of outreach thing. During my term as a City Council member and when this park was moved to that location, I had community meetings. I addressed the issue at every neighborhood association meeting in the 7th District. I had Parks and Recreation with me. We had a plan. The hair kind of stands up on my back when I see attempts to delay a process that has been ongoing for 20 years. And I know that I did due-diligence when I was on the City Council to bring this project forward, and the only thing that was recommended by the community at that time was some space around the park, a jogging path, of course a creek and a public skate park. I am going to read this really quickly and I should be able to summarize my comments. During my term as Councilmember, one of the most controversial issues I dealt with was the location of the long-studied pay-for-play sports complex at El Dorado Park. This issue was the foundation for the creation of Save the Parks, a group started by local environmentalists. Their goal was to stop the sports complex from being built in El Dorado Park to preserve open space. After several years of hard work, the group was successful in having the City relocate the project to the southwest corner of Orange Avenue and Spring Street, a site that has a long history of soil contamination issues. The site is also geographically unsuited for any other type of development. The intent of the pay-for-play sports complex is to move adults to that facility and create more space and opportunities for youth activities in our free public parks. With an increase in youth that desperately need outdoor physical activities, I find it hard to believe that the same activists that opposed the El Dorado Park location are now attempting to downsize the space for sports activities and create more open space. I recognize the importance of educating youth about environmental issues. It is equally, if not more important to provide outdoor activities for our young people, especially those that are at risk. The environmentalist I have read about, and myself, have been fortunate enough to have been able to provide many opportunities for our own children. Many families depend on local park activities to give their children that much needed outlet they get from sports. It is an opportunity for kids to vent and relax with their friends. I assure you that the last thing my kids would want to do is sit and watch open space instead of kicking a soccer ball or doing back flips off a ramp at a skate park. There comes a time when we as adults should set aside our personal political agendas and let the kids have their way. It is my hope that our elected officials will remember that they were

kids once upon a time and allow maximum space for sports activities and give the youth of Long Beach what they need most; free activities in free parks, close to their own homes.”

Mr. Donelon said, “This was done in November and we intend to carry this message, at least I do, to the City Council. During my term with the City Council in 1996, I brought forth a proposal that everyone thought was absolutely insane. And that was to create free and public skate parks. During that time I had the opportunity to work with hundreds of kids. And during my term on the City Council I represented West Long Beach. I know the problems that we had with adult sports in our free parks. Not just to mention the space that the kids need, but some of the issues they had in West Long Beach like in Hudson Park, the drinking, fighting, inappropriate behavior by adults. This is a great passion and I don’t have many. I don’t care about politics, but if there is one passion I have that I know, I have many people behind me, is for this city’s youth. I know Bea and Harry, you guys have been here for a long time and I know all of you share the same passion that I do. Most of you worked very hard with the community on the skate park program. In closing I just want to say, I didn’t look at the plans and I really don’t care. I want the City to do what it intended to do 20 years ago and it has been a very, very long time, is create the most space you can for adult sports to free up the space in our free public parks for our kids. And I am not an environmentalist, but when it comes to this city’s kids, and especially those at risk, I really don’t give a damn about watering holes, about ducks, geese, anything. I do sincerely care about this city’s kids and I would hope that you guys would support this. Thank you.”

“Good morning Commissioners. I think what I am about to say mirrors what Mr. Hoy and this gentleman just said. My name is Lisa Duarte and I am the current president of Los Altos Bobby Sox. With me today is our division representative, Yvette Ramos, and the national director, of Bobby Sock Nation, Kym Rohlf. Since 1952, Bobby Sox Softball has been a non-profit, charitable, educational organization giving the girls of Long Beach and all over the freedom to play a game of softball. Los Altos Softball has been part of that organization for decades. Our home fields are now at El Dorado and Marina Vista Parks and we have been fortunate over the years to be able to provide the youth of Long Beach with a place to play. The number of children who want to participate in youth softball as well as soccer and other sports activities has increased dramatically in Southern California and we at Los Altos Bobby Sox, as I am sure all the other youth sports organizations, are doing all we can do accommodate this growing need. Los Altos Bobby Sox has approximately 160 children who participate in our softball program and we are now at the point where we are turning children away. We are turning children away because we don’t have enough field time at Marina Vista Park we have been asked to cut our usage on Saturdays so that the adult soccer leagues can come in and play on that field. Even more disheartening is that as we turn the children away, so do all the other youth leagues. They are too full to capacity and these children simply have no place else to go. We know that the sports complex will

significantly increase ours as well as soccer and other youth sports programs and allow more children in the City of Long Beach to have a place to play. The mere fact that all these children want to participate in a youth sports program is of utmost importance.”

“My name is Bob McKittrick and I represent the youth of the community as well as local baseball. Tom Parker said I was the self-proclaimed champion of the youth one time. I told him that I have been called worse. I would rather be a self-proclaimed champion of the kids than any other thing I can think of. I go back to the day that this thing first became a concept. Jim Ruth came up with this as a concept and I said, ‘hey, let’s go to town.’ I was thinking then that it probably wouldn’t help my children by the time we got it conceptually put together. If we don’t get on the ball, it’s going to have to be my great grandkids. We need to move forward on this. You know what, I believe in being a good neighbor and trying to work with different people in the community. This has been an excellent plan. I feel like Mike did. You know, something is better than nothing but we have to build this thing. I would like my grandkids to see this before they have their children play on it. All the things that these people said are a hundred times true and that was the whole idea. Get the adults off the inner-city fields so we can get some of the soccer overlays off, so everyone can have something they can kind of call home and be able to invest their money into leagues and fields they can call home. They invest hundreds of dollars in those fields, not just their time. I presented a thing one time to the Commission. I think we saved something like \$9 million a year just off of our program. Correct me if I am wrong, Bea, but I think that was the number that we came up with. So the groups are giving something back. And that was based on minimum wage with no benefits. I beg of you, push this thing on down the road. We are willing to make the exceptions here and I am sure these people feel the same way. Let’s get it done for the kids. There are more problems with idle minds and idle hands. Thank you.”

“Good morning. Kristen Autry, P.O. Box 20378. I was wondering, I really think that balance is very important in our life and as you can see in El Dorado Park there is lots of beautiful open space. Not everybody is an athlete. Some people like to sit and look at nature and write. I think we are very fortunate that David is trying to bring more balance into the sports park. We really need to know that open space is important.”

“I’m Trey Scharlin, Long Beach Soccer Club, 8030 Tarma Street. I just want to say that it is obviously disheartening to us to see soccer fields removed from the plan. What the relief that these soccer fields can give to the kids in the community, one thing that I want the Commission to understand and the public to understand is gone are the days when kids are going to the park and just playing and just being involved in themselves. Organized sports and organized activities, things like that, are the future and it is the direction, unfortunately that we are heading with our youth. Loosing fields to the adults, I have played in men’s leagues for many years and have fought on both sides of this. But we do

need more field space, not only for soccer but for all youth sports. There are roughly about 3,000 to 5,000 who converge on soccer fields in Long Beach every day. So, we do need more soccer fields but we do need this sports park to help relieve the space and give these kids an opportunity to go out and play. We have turned away kids; every organization has to turn away kids. But the reason is because that kids aren't going to these parks and playing on their own any more. So free space is great, we do need free space but we do need these fields to give these kids a place to play. Hopefully, we can just push this forward and everybody's happy in the community, but we desperately, desperately need this."

"Michael Gatz, 506 (? inaudible) Avenue. I represent AYSO 577, which is the east side of Belmont Shore area for youth soccer. This year we had 1,722 kids play soccer with us. We have increased our number by about 10%. We don't have enough fields to run practices or game times. The sports park would be a great improvement. It would really help us and more importantly, we hope it can happen as soon as possible because we have run out of fields and are turning kids away that can't play soccer or participate in the sport they choose. That not only affects soccer but also affects other sports."

Mr. Sundstrom made the following comments. "I just want to make a request of staff that first of all, we don't oppose youth sports and we don't oppose construction of fields. If that is a point of division, it is entirely in the imagination of some speakers at the podium today. What I would like to do is to create some realistic expectations about when these fields might be delivered to the community. Perhaps either Dennis or Phil could address and give some realism of raising \$40 million for this park and actually getting some of these fields in service. I am not talking about a year from now; we may not talking about five years or more from now. I'd like to hear from the experts. I think that is important to make that part of public record."

Vice President Saltzgaver then spoke. "I am going to bring it back within behind the rail, as they say. I will start with that question. Financing has been an issue. Bea, you have raised that issue in the past. We need some kind of reality check here."

Mr. Hester said, "Well, the tough part is we don't know what it will cost us. I have heard all kinds of numbers that have been floating out there from \$20 million to \$50 million. As soon as the EIR gets close to finalization, staff has already started internal meetings to talk about financing opportunities for this. The City has gotten some federal money to do some street work and stuff. That will help out. Until we get the final plan decided, there is no way to tell how much this is going to cost and where we are going to go to try and get this financed. There are some things that are in place, essentially to help. Until we get the final plan settled, and that is what has been frustrating is getting the plan in place, we will know exactly what we are talking about. Again, this has been the top project in the city, in spite of all the other things that are talked about.

The Mayor references it all the time. So I think that once we get the EIR is in place and we know what this project is, we move forth with putting together the financing."

Mr. Eschen said that considering the physical aspects, the construction design would take between 12 and 18 months and the construction would take between 12 and 18 months. So if financing were in place, it could be built within three years.

Mr. McKittrick said, "The question is, if we start today moving forward, it doesn't matter, it is going to take the same amount to fund it if it is two years from now than it is to fund it today if we start on it, wouldn't we? If it is going to take ten years from today or ten years, two years from now."

Vice President Saltzgaver said, "Commissioners, Brett."

Commissioner Waterfield commented, "I just want say from a Commissioners standpoint and being involved in the city, I want to commend Larry and the staff who are really, really working on what has been a challenging site and the compromises that we hear. I also wasn't real excited about seeing a soccer field go away. But, I think that in trying to meet all the needs of the community, everyone from the staff has taken a responsible role in doing that. You feel very passionate about the opportunity to provide this to the community and also I want to give a thanks of appreciation to all the many youth sports volunteers, not paid people, volunteers, who have come in today to let it be known how important it is and also are constantly involved in shaping the character and lives of our youth. We appreciate that also."

Vice President Saltzgaver said, "Bea, question, comment."

Commissioner Antenore spoke. "I have a comment. I have been working on this in different ways since the outset with Bob McKittrick on a committee that I chaired. I want to see a sports complex. I think you all know my feelings about the amount of discussion that we have had through the years. I really feel that we are never going to please everybody and that we need to move ahead with the sports complex. And if some people are unhappy, happiness is not 100% and we have to look what it is going to do for the most people for the benefit. I frankly have said before, I don't think I am going to live to see it."

Vice President Saltzgaver said, "The new Commissioner."

Commissioner Guerra said, "The term trial by fire is appropriate. Although I have been doing a lot of speed reading in the last week to get caught up, I don't feel I have to get caught up too much because I do live very close to the proposed project. I shouldn't say proposed, future project. And I have young children, as I mentioned earlier, and I do hope that some day they can use the facility. Bea made a comment a minute ago that she still hopes to be alive."

While I am very sorry to hear you say that, so we should move it forward pretty quickly. I too, from what I have seen and what I have heard, I feel that the efforts have been done to bring a balance to the project. In looking at the last two recommendations or proposals, in my opinion I think that that balance has been met. So, I commend all the efforts of all the staff and City personnel who have worked hard to do this, as well as the volunteers, because I too am a volunteer in my own neighborhood. I realize to take time out of your day to come out and speak to something so important is important for our youth and for our own kids. I appreciate that as well. Thank you."

Vice President Saltzgaver said, "Drew."

Commissioner Satariano spoke. "Yes, thank you. I have a couple of comments that I want to make. First I need to disclose that I have a son who plays in the Los Altos Baseball/Softball organization and I have experienced the overloading of the fields where the softball teams come full of enthusiasm and have to vacate the fields early. But that aside with my Commissioners hat on, I respectfully disagree with Mr. Sundstrom. I don't think that the process has been flawed. In fact, I think it is an exemplary example of city government working with citizens to try to strike a balance and get it right. I definitely am not for dragging this on much longer. I think that staff has bent over backwards to accommodate environmental issues and balance issues in just about everything they can and continue to move the ball forward. To this day they are continuing to bend over backwards and I would like to see us come to the end of a process and start this project knowing that we can adjust on the fly as we go forward and it would be monitored like no project has been monitored before. But, whether it comes in the way of motion from this Commission or however you'd like to accept it Harry, I would just like the Commission to go on record today recommending, whether it be the original plan or whether it be plan 3A or 3B, pick a plan and let's move forward and take that momentum and enthusiasm to the City Council and let them know in no uncertain terms that we want this project to go forward and I think that's what we are hearing from the people at the podium today. I would also like to thank the youth sports volunteers in the city for all of the time that they do volunteer for our kids."

Vice President Saltzgaver said, "Is that in the form of a motion?"

Commissioner Satariano said, "I would like to say that in the form of a motion, and I would receive a second from one of the Commissioners."

Commissioner Waterfield said, "I would second that."

Vice President Saltzgaver spoke. "Before I take a vote I would like to take the prerogative of the chair and make a couple of comments myself. I have been assured that these alternative plans fit within the purview of the currently certified EIR. That is critical in that if we have to go back to do a new EIR, it is more time again. But, as I have been assured both by the experts

environmentally and legally, that we are within the certified EIR. I want to make sure everyone knows that. Second, I would like to also say that I believe that this spirit of compromise has been one that I have not seen in the city before. The fact that there remains some contentiousness is just life I suppose. The fact that there has been an attempt to accommodate both and Option 3B is less advantageous to the active sports park in that our soccer folks are going to have to walk a little further and our soccer folks are going to have to haul their equipment a little further. I am really kind of excited about the idea of actually making Exxon Hill accessible to the public. In that sense, I do believe that we have come up with a better plan. I hate clichés, but I believe this is a win, win situation. I can say that honestly instead of just trying to make a point politically. I believe this has been a really good process that we have gone through. Finally, I would say that remember this is a recommendation to the City Council. We have already approved the idea of the sports park here. City Council will make that decision. With that said, I call for the vote.”

Mr. Hester said that he had a couple of comments. “First of all, I think in fairness to Mr. Sundstrom, who came today and has been representing the environmental interest, he should be recognized for, getting us to this particular balance. I think his approach in working with the community and the staff in trying to come to alternatives has made it much easier to be able to get there. Previously, that has always been a very difficult situation. But, I think that his ability to look at compromise and his willingness to take that lead also should be recognized. There are a lot of people who trust him and I think in fairness to him, we should try to support him and his efforts to keep that group working together with us. Second thing I wanted to say is that I have been department head here, and one of my primary goals is to look at other areas other than just the active areas. I think that we have in the last five or six years made significant increases in open space throughout the city, commitments to preservation of wetland areas, access to the Los Angeles River and some of those type of things. I think that we have tried, as a department, to balance that. At the same time, we have to stand face to face with these individuals out here who definitely need more space, and that still is our continuing challenge. I just need to get clarification of what the motion is. If we are moving forward, is it to recommend to the City Council three alternatives, which is the original plan, Option A, 3A, and Option 3B for their consideration. You are not making an independent recommendation, you are looking at options. If that is your recommendation, I would suggest also that there is another meeting set for February 25, to share these particular options with some of the community members, with the understanding that we are not redesigning the plans but to share the options. If your plan is to move forth with the three options, we would recommend also just to keep the Commission in the loop that we be instructed to come back to you at your March meeting to update you about that meeting and anything that happened as a result of that meeting. Which, I wouldn’t anticipate that there would be. But there might be some more refinement of some of these particular plans, and you need to be made aware of that before they go to the City Council.”

Commissioner Satariano said, "I think the spirit that I was trying to capture was that any one of the three would be acceptable. We would certainly want an update as to what comes from that meeting in February. I think the statement that I would hope the Commission would make that just pick one of the three viable options that everyone is comfortable with and move forward and not go back to the drawing board."

Commission Antenore asked, "So what is the motion?"

Vice President Saltzgaver said that the motion is to recommend the three options to the City Council with the plea to move this project forward and with the understanding that we will receive an update from the February 25 meeting at the March Commission meeting.

Commission Guerra said, "Would it be possible at our March for us to have one option and make a motion to recommend that one option?"

Mr. Hester responded, "Yes." As a result of the February 25, if there seems to be a consensus that comes out of that meeting, I can say yes. We can come back and then you as a Commission can decide if you wanted to focus more on one or the other. I don't want to speak for Council, but in the Council's interest in the original plan, they are very much interested in also what the other options that have been looked at."

It was moved by Commissioner Satariano and seconded by Commissioner Waterfield to recommend to the City Manager, the Planning Commission and the City Council that Option 3A and 3B are viable designs for improvement of a Sports Park and passive park as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Saltzgaver requested a short break.

Vice President Saltzgaver, after returning from the break, indicated that they would go back to the regular items on the agenda.

VI. COMMITTEE STATUS REPORTS

A. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE President Kozaites, Chair

Vice President Saltzgaver said that the Executive Committee met and went over the agenda. They heard they were to have a new Commissioner and we are excited about that. They also discussed a little bit about the sports park.

B. FINANCE AND APPEALS COMMITTEE
Commissioner Satariano, Chair

Commissioner Satariano said that the report was included in the packet. He reported that one third of the fiscal year has expired and encouraged the Commissioners to look at the bottom line.

Vice President Saltzgaver said that he would like to go back to the Executive Committee report for just a second. He said that they would be asking Commissioner Guerra to serve on several committees but he would prefer to defer that to when the President returns and he has a chance to get together with him. We can expect the adjusted committee assignments next month.

C. PARK SAFETY COMMITTEE
Commissioner Waterfield, Chair

Commissioner Waterfield stated that the Park Safety Committee did not meet this month. He turned the Commissioner's attention to the incident statistic report and the increasing public contacts, which is a good sign that rangers are getting out and interacting with the public.

Vice President Saltzgaver asked what the status was of hiring a Chief Park Ranger.

Mr. Hester responded that William Greco is Acting Chief Park Ranger.

Commissioner Waterfield asked if there was any update on the ranger station.

Mr. Hester responded that it is moving forward.

Acting Chief Ranger Greco responded that they just picked the interior colors and it is moving right along.

D. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION COMMITTEE
Commissioner Satariano, Chair

Commissioner Satariano stated that the Committee did not meet this month. The report was mailed separately and he briefly went over the report on how customer comment cards are processed.

E. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS COMMITTEE
Commissioner George, Chair

Commissioner George stated that the Committee met this morning and they discussed the sports park.

F. CITY SCHOOLS/JOINT COMMITTEE
Commissioner Antenore, Chair

Commissioner Antenore requested Vice President Saltzgaver to go over the highlights of the meeting, since she was not able to attend.

Vice President Saltzgaver briefly went over the meeting.

G. SPECIAL EVENTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE
Vice President Saltzgaver, Chair

Vice President Saltzgaver requested that Commissioner Satariano brief the Commissioners on the meeting.

Commissioner Satariano said that this is a new committee established to address the need for coverage on events permitted by both the Special Events and Filming Bureau and Community Recreation Programs Bureau.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO COMMISSION

A. DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY REPORT – JANUARY 2006

Commissioner Satariano mentioned that on page 22, the 22 tons removed from the beaches seemed less than previous spring numbers.

Mr. Shippey responded that it was because there haven't been the storms as in previous years, to wash the debris down the rivers.

Commissioner Antenore asked what the California Air Resources Board training on January 25, was all about, as listed on page 9.

Mr. Hester stated that they probably just rented our facility. We would have to get back to her.

Commissioner Guerra stated that he was impressed by the monthly highlights because he had no idea how many things are happening. He asked for a listing of how many parks there are and what all the functions of what each parks do.

Mr. Hester stated that staff would put together a packet.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that there was no correspondence received, other than the request from Mr. Sundstrom on the Sports Park item.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Vice President Saltzgaver stated that there was no unfinished business.

XI. COMMENTS

A. AUDIENCE

Vice President Saltzgaver asked for comments from the audience. There were no comments from the audience.

B. STAFF

Mr. Alvin Bernstein distributed flyers on events at the Rancho Los Cerritos.

Mr. Hester went over the plan to extend the Municipal Band from six weeks to eight weeks.

C. COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Waterfield apologized for being late; he was attending the NCCJ breakfast.

Commissioner Waterfield also said that CSULB is in the middle of planning a community collaboration day symposium, which brings together community agencies, which serve the youth. He would discuss this more with Chrissy Marshall.

Commissioner Waterfield said that he knows that the City responded to the Hurricane Katrina and he found out that there was a video that was put together that the campus would like to access. On April 9, he would be taking about 35 students on an alternative spring break trip to Lake Charles, Louisiana to build houses. Prior to that, they would like to hear from people in the community who responded to the disaster.

Mr. Hester recommended that he talk to the Fire Chief. They were called and worked there.

Commissioner Antenore stated that she would not be able to attend the March Commission meeting; she would be attending an EdSource conference.

Commissioner Guerra said that he lives in California Heights and technically there are no parks near that neighborhood. At some point he would like to discuss pocket parks for that area. The Sports Park would be the nearest park to that neighborhood.

Mr. Hester said he would be very interested in discussing options for smaller parks in the area because they spend a lot of time trying to find locations.

Mr. Hester thanked the Commission for coming together on the Sports Park project because it has been a long process.

XII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 16, 2006, at El Dorado Park West, in the Senior Center Library, 2800 Studebaker Rd., Long Beach.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

President Kozaites adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Black
Executive Secretary
to the Director

c: Phil T. Hester, Director of Parks, Recreation and Marine